

What The Bible Says About

The Priesthood of the Believer Part 2: What Am I To Do?



Living Together In The Love Of God

4038 Graham Sherron Rd
Wake Forest, NC 27587

Pastor David Buffaloe
Home 919-562-9456 Cell 919-600-4925
online at bibleteacher.org

Focal 1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

What were the three groups of believers found in the time when Jesus ministered on the earth. How did Jesus challenge these groups? _____

As the Apostle Peter wrote to the Church, he wanted to emphasize to every Christian how important it is that we properly understand our priesthood. Israel as a nation had fallen to the unbelieving nation called Rome. The reason that Israel fell was not because Rome was so powerful, but because God's nation had walked away from the Lord. The reason that God's nation had walked so far away from the Lord was because Israel's priests walked away from the Lord. In his book *The Next Christians* author Gabe Lyons writes about the world that Jesus Christ ministered in.

"Some Jews, called *Pharisees*, believed that holiness - strict rigid obedience to the Law of Moses and to all the traditions - was the only way to ride these bad times out. At the same time, another group called the *Essenes* was so disgusted by the immorality and the impurity they saw that they decided to distance themselves from society and await God's return to Israel. In contrast, the *Sadducees* and *Herodians* bore striking resemblance to the cultural Christians. ("Cultural Christians" are those who profess to be

Christian, but are more influenced by society than by Christ. Some call them "Nominal Christians") **These two groups** (the Sadducees and the Herodians) **decided not to put up a fight with the societal changes taking place all around them. They determined it was better just to go along with culture and accommodate the change. They assumed that the faith to which they ascribed couldn't make much of a difference culturally; it should remain a private matter, a relic of their heritage.Jesus' perspective appears to stand in stark contrast to both expressions ... Jesus modeled something altogether different: "Eat with Me and I will make you clean" Jesus also avoided the Cultural Christian mentality possessed by the Sadducees and Herodians. He didn't give in to the political pressure of the day to use the Church as a place for merchants to set up shop. Jesus lived, modeled, taught, and embodied a different way - a better way.**

The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ is our High Priest. It is He that we look to when we consider how we should be priests:



Hebrews 3:1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

When Jesus came to this earth He modeled a Christianity that was neither separatist or monkish, neither did He

bow to tradition for tradition's sake.

Jesus Christ embraced the world with the Love of God - but never compromised with sin nor did He compromise the Word of God.

Jesus came to this earth representing His Father, calling all people to salvation by Him. Jesus saw His ministry as a **ministry of restoration**. When John the Baptist was in prison he had a moment of doubt. During that moment of doubt he sent his disciples to Jesus asking "**Are you the Messiah Who was coming? Or should we look for another?**" (Luke 7:20). Jesus said:

Luke 7:22-23 ... Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. 23 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

He restored the sight to the blind, strength to the lame, the lepers to their families, hearing to the deaf, life to the dead, and hope to the hopeless. Jesus did not do this by walling Himself off from the world. Jesus was - as we are to be - **in the world but not of the world**. Jesus prayed for His Church, saying:



John 17:14-15 I have given them Your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the

world any more than I am of the world. 15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.

Jesus was simply in the world - physically present - but He did not ascribe to its values. We as God's Priests are to be the same way.

How does the word "restoration" illustrate the ministry of Jesus Christ? _____

Believer Priests Are To Offer Sacrifices To God

Focal 1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:



The Old Testament Priest offered *five types of sacrifices* on the altar. The **Burnt Offering** was

where an animal that had neither spot nor blemish was sacrificed for the sins of the people (**Leviticus 6:13**). The **Cereal Offering (Leviticus 2)** was thrown in the fire just like the Burnt Offering. In the **Peace Offering** only the fat and entrails of the sacrificed animal was burned. The remainder was roasted and eaten by the Priests and the People. The unintentional sins of the

people were atoned for by the **Sin Offering (Leviticus 4:1-2)**. In this offering the fat from the entrails was burned on the altar, but the body of the animal was burned *outside the camp*. The **Trespass Offering** was similar to the Sin Offering, but it involved paying a monetary compensation for acts of sin connected with fraud.

The Old Testament sacrifices looked forward to and taught of the coming Messiah. In the New Testament we offer none of the sacrifices, but Jesus is **the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world**. The Bible says:

Hebrews 7:27 {Jesus} needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for **this he did once, when he offered up himself.**

Jesus Christ offered up *one sacrifice for sin* - Himself. This Sacrifice was so satisfactory that **He obtained eternal redemption for us.**

Hebrews 9:11-12 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; **12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.**

New Testament Believer Priests are indeed to offer up

sacrifices to God. Our sacrifices are *not offered in order to purchase or add to our salvation*. Rather they are offered *because we are saved*.

If you are born again by faith in Christ then you will want to offer these sacrifices. It is your duty - and your pleasure - as a Priest of God.

Notes: _____

We Offer Up Our Bodies To God As Living Sacrifices

Focal 1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood ...

The Old Testament Priest offered animal sacrifices which spoke of the *Coming Christ*. The New Testament Priest offers his or her own self as *living sacrifices which speak of the Christ Who has come*.

Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye **present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.** 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Word Study The word "present" is the Greek

PARISTEMI (παριστημι Pronounced *par-is'-tay-mee*), which means "**to exhibit, proffer, to place at the disposal of**". Our Lord Jesus Christ **offered up Himself (Hebrews 7:27)** in order to save us from our sins. We as Priests follow His example and sacrificially offer ourselves back to God as **living sacrifices**. We are called to not the *easy believism Gospel* that has been so readily preached in modern times. The Lord Jesus Christ called His disciples to commitment. As God's Priests we are called to commitment to our Master. Jesus said:

Luke 9:23-26 {Jesus} said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. 24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. 25 For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? 26 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

A priest is not ashamed of his High Priest, nor is he ashamed of his God. The New Testament Priests **take up their Cross and follow Jesus** as willing, living sacrifices.

Notice also the wording of our text. It says "**present your bodies a living sacrifice**". The word "**bodies**" is plural, but "**sacrifice**" is singular. A Church is many members bound together moving toward a common goal. This is emphasized in our Romans context:

Context Romans 12:4-5 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Why is it important for God's priests to work together?

In the Old Testament the priesthood had to work together to do everything, from the moving of the Tabernacle when Israel moved to the sacrifice of animals. For instance, the **Kohathite clan (Numbers 4:1-20)** was given the task of moving the most holy things, but not until the items were covered by the Gershonites. The **Gershonite clan (Numbers 4:21-28)** is responsible for moving curtains, ropes, and other coverings. **The Merarites clan (Numbers 4:29-33)** carried the frames, crossbars, bases, and tent pegs. There were 2750 Kohathites, 2630 Gershonites, and 3200 Merarites, for a grand total of 8580 Tabernacle movers (**Numbers 4:34-49**). Each person had a specific job to do if the Tabernacle was going to be taken down and set up complete when Israel moved.

God presents Himself to the world through His Priests. We - just like the Old Testament Priest - must work together to present God to this age. The Apostle Paul said:

1 Corinthians 10:31-33 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

32 Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: 33 Even as I



please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

Priests work together for the **glory of God**. The message that we carry is inherently offensive. The inclusive world does not like the teaching that

Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life: No man comes to God the Father but through Him (John 14:6). Nobody likes the message that **all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)**. They don't like to hear that all people are naturally broke, and need what Christ has to offer.

The Gospel message is offensive. We as God's Priests need to take care that we do not add unnecessary offense by disharmony within the Priesthood. We are called to - together - **present our bodies A Living Sacrifice**.

Colossians 3:17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Illustration In World War 2 Nazi Germans systematically exterminated six million European Jews. They also murdered Romani, Soviet prisoners of war, Polish and Soviet civilians, homosexuals, people with

disabilities, Jehovah's Witnesses and other political and religious opponents both German and non-German. It is estimated that the total number of Holocaust victims was between 11 to 17 million people. Where was the Church in Germany when this was all taking place? The Church was much like the Church in America today. People did not, by and large, feel that their Christianity should have any impact on the world around them. Not everyone was that way.

Lutheran Pastor **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** refused to be silent in the face of Nazi atrocities. Bonhoeffer wrote in his book *Costly Grace*,

"Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate."

Bonhoeffer believed that Christians - saved by Grace - were called to be world changers, followers of Jesus Christ. In his book *Cost of Discipleship* Bonhoeffer wrote:

"When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."

We who believe are to be living sacrifices, to stand up for the Gospel and for God's Good.

While most of the Church in Nazi Germany looked the



other way, Dietrich Bonhoeffer stood up for God and against Nazism. In April 1943 he was arrested, imprisoned, and eventually hanged in the Flossenbürg Concentration Camp just before the end of World War 2, laying his life down with the other 30,000 who died in that hellish place.

Believer Priests offer themselves as living sacrifices unto God. What does this mean? _____

As Priests, We Offer Up Continual Praise To God

Focal 1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

The Believer Priest is to offer up continual praise unto God. We are to **shew forth the praises of Him Who called us out of darkness and into His marvelous light**. The Scripture says:

Hebrews 13:13-15 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. **14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.**

15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

As Believer Priests we come together with the intent of praising the Lord and magnifying His Name. We may be reproached for our faith. But praise unto God,

... we should not be discouraged by how things are, but should consider and work toward **how things ought to be.**

God has given us great and blessed promises in His Word. God has never lied to us. He has promised:

1 John 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

and

1 John 5:4-5 For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

The early Christian knew that Jesus Christ rose from the grave. The early Christian knew that the world he lived in was corrupt and growing more rotten every day. The early Christian knew that **God is able**, and knew that he was called into partnership with God.

The early Christian knew that if he stood on God's Promises and - working together with other brothers and sisters in Christ - kept spreading the Gospel of the Kingdom by his words and actions - that in time society would be changed.

For the early Christian being a Priest unto God meant that he praised the Lord by how he spoke and lived. His lifestyle was not self gratification but God gratification. He heeded the words of the Apostle:

Ephesians 5:18-21 ... be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; 19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; 20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; 21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

and by this joy filled lifestyle conquered the world around him.

**As Priests We Influence the World,
But Are Not Influenced By It**

Focal 1 Peter 2:9 **But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:**

Word Study The words translated "**a peculiar**" people is the Greek EIS PERIPOIESIS (εις Pronounced *ice*) +

(περιποιησις **Pronounced** *per-ee-poy'-ay-sis*), which literally means "**an abundantly particular people**".

When the world sees a Christian that individual - just as the Priest of old - should look and act distinctly different. God wrote a blank check of Grace to each one of us who are saved. We in turn are to daily give God the blank check of our lives, asking Him to fill it in.

Too often we let the world fill in the blank check of our life. The Apostle Paul said:

Romans 12:2 ... be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

We as Priests are to continually approach the Word of God and, in a prayerful manner, read it, study it, meditate on it. We allow the world - to include not only family and friends but also print and electronic media - to flood our souls. If this is all that you feed your soul then you will never be able to **prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.**

How do I avoid being "programmed" by the world?

Illustrate On my computers I have a program that provides *virus protection*. This program constantly

monitors whatever comes into the computer. If it senses a virus - something that will harm the computer - it will lock it up and warn me, giving me the opportunity to stop the trespasser. Your mind is much more complex than any computer devised by man. God has given you a program - His Holy Bible - that you are to read and go by every single day. If you do not keep this Divine Program in place evil virus' from the world can creep in, marring your ability to perform your God given calling as Believer Priests.



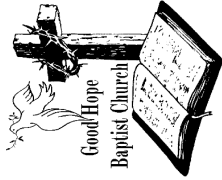
You must read, meditate on, and study His Word. By doing so the Lord grows you, and eventually uses you to change the world for His glory.

As we study His Word we learn that Christians are not just supposed to sit on a pew and veg out. We are to do good in the name of Jesus Christ. The Bible says:

Romans 12:13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

We are to do good toward our brothers and sisters. We are priests together. **When one member suffers, all the members should suffer with it (1 Corinthians 12:26).** We work together.

Galatians 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.



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